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# AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

## STUDENT REPORT

BOOK ANALYSIS: TAKING CHARGE, A  
PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR LEADERS

MAJOR MICHAEL W. BUTLER 88-0425

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## PREFACE

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Leadership means different things to different people. A leader can simply be the person who's looked up to for some reason. For children, a leader could be the child who has the best toys or the brightest clothes. The leader in high school could be the president of the student council or the captain of the football team. Because leadership is so varied and can be applied in so many ways, it's extremely difficult to understand what it is or how to recognize it.

Some say leaders are born and not made. The author believes the opposite -- leaders are made, not born. Regardless of which assertion is correct, any person who believes he is a leader, or endeavors to be a better leader, can benefit from the study of leadership. Those who realize the importance of such study have already discovered a wealth of material on the subject. Literally hundreds of books, articles, and essays permeate our written communications. Even more lessons of leadership pass via speeches, lectures, and counseling sessions.

It's also true you cannot always believe everything you read or hear. With such a deluge of information on leadership, authors and speakers cannot necessarily be taken at face value. Their views must be critically analyzed to determine their validity and applicability to various circumstances.

This research project endeavors to determine if one author, Perry M. Smith's opinions are valid. His work is entitled Taking Charge, A Practical Guide for Leaders. The method I've chosen to perform this critical analysis is to research the thoughts put forth by Gen Smith and compare them to the thoughts of others who have written on the subject. In addition, since Gen Smith's purpose in publishing Taking Charge was to write a practical guide for leaders of large organizations, I've tried to show that his book can also be useful to leaders of smaller organizations.

Chapter One establishes Gen Smith's thesis -- that leaders count -- is valid by showing how leaders have influenced their organizations throughout history.

Chapter Two provides a brief biographical sketch of Gen Smith so the reader can understand his biases.

Chapter Three comments on the content of Taking Charge and analyzes the validity of Gen Smith's principles and fundamentals based on a literature review and personal experience of the author. In addition, the author suggests how Gen Smith's writings apply to leaders of organizations smaller than those he originally meant them for.

Chapter Four details those areas which are not applicable to

the small units.

Finally, Chapter Five comments on the book as a whole, and draws a brief conclusion about how it can be used in leadership studies.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Michael W. Butler is an Aircraft Maintenance Staff Officer, currently attending the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He began his Air Force career in 1976 with a brief tour at Chanute Air Force Base while attending the Aircraft Maintenance Officers Course (AMOC). After his initial technical training in AMOC he was assigned as a flightline maintenance and job control officer at Bitburg Air Base, Germany from March 1977 - March 1980. In April 1980 he was reassigned to the 405th Tactical Training Wing first as Officer-In-Charge of the Maintenance Coordinator Center and later as Maintenance Supervisor of the 405th Equipment Maintenance Squadron. In July 1983 he was assigned to Headquarters Tactical Air Command, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. As Chief, Maintenance Manpower Branch, Policy and Procedures Division he was responsible for evaluating maintenance manpower requirement for all maintenance units in Tactical Air Command. In his most recent assignment as Maintenance Supervisor of the 8th Aircraft Generation Squadron, Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea he was responsible for the daily flightline maintenance and wartime generation of 53 F-16 aircraft.

Major Butler holds a Bachelor of Science degree in General Studies from the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado and a Masters of Science Degree in Management from Troy State University in Alabama. He is a graduate of the Aircraft Maintenance Officers Course, the Aircraft Maintenance Staff Officers Course and a graduate of the Squadron Officer School.

During Major Butler's tour at Bitburg Air Base, Germany, his Vice Wing Commander and later Wing Commander was then Colonel, now Perry M. Smith, MGEN, United States Air Force, retired.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part of our College mission is distribution of the students' problem solving products to DoD sponsors and other interested agencies to enhance insight into contemporary, defense related issues. While the College has accepted this product as meeting academic requirements for graduation, the views and opinions expressed or implied are solely those of the author and should not be construed as carrying official sanction.

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**AUTHOR(S)** MAJOR MICHAEL W. BUTLER

**TITLE** BOOK ANALYSIS: TAKING CHARGE, A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR LEADERS

I. Purpose: To determine if the opinions presented by Gen Smith are valid for large organizations and show the same concepts can be applicable to smaller units even though Gen Smith's purpose was to write a practical guide for leaders of large organizations.

II. Problem: Thousands of authors have written on the subject of leadership. Some authors have credibility and others don't. Since all leadership literature can't be accepted at face value, it must be analyzed in relationship to contemporary leadership thought to determine its applicability to various circumstances.

III. Data: Gen Smith's premise that --leaders count -- is a valid assertion. It's supported by historical examples such as President Kennedy, Churchill, and George Washington. It's also supported by realizing the areas controlled by the leader of an organization. Those areas include, but are not limited to, setting goals, priorities, and interpreting the mission of the unit. These areas together show that Gen Smith is proceeding from a valid assumption.

Gen Smith provides his philosophy of leadership as a foundation with which to begin. He uses 20 fundamentals to project his philosophy. Comparing those fundamentals with the thoughts of other authors who have written on the subject reveals he is in

line with contemporary thought. Gen Smith's fundamentals include the qualities of trust, vision, intuition, humor and most importantly, integrity. These characteristics added to techniques such as being a good teacher, being a good communicator, and managing time well make up a major portion of his philosophy of leadership.

Gen Smith's concepts touch on many areas which deal with leading in an organization. Those areas begin with preparing to take over an organization, through hiring, firing, and counseling subordinates. His concepts provide helpful information on leading.

IV. Conclusion: Gen Smith wrote a concise, readable book which is a practical guide for leaders. The information provided is valid for both leaders of large and small organizations. Although a few of the concepts have limited use for leaders of smaller organizations, the information isn't wasted because the novice leader will use the information later in his career.

V. Recommendation: Taking Charge should be required reading for all potential military commanders and leaders. Its general nature stimulates thought on leadership and provides a foundation for the continued development of sound leadership principles.

## Chapter One

Gen Smith's premise that leaders make a difference is a correct one. Gen Smith wrote:

My fundamental premise is that leaders count, that people at the top can--should--make a difference. By setting standards, goals and priorities, by establishing and nurturing a network of communications, a leader can make a difference in the daily performance of an organization. A leader can permanently affect an organization by establishing a strategic vision and setting long-term goals (13:viii).

The purpose of this chapter is to support the assertion that his premise is valid and to suggest several examples from modern history which demonstrate the validity of Gen Smith's premise, leaders count.

One man can guide the momentum of an organization consisting of thousands of individuals. To believe otherwise is to suggest that those people written about and studied throughout history are merely figureheads who have contributed little more than a name in history books. To believe otherwise is to suggest a person we call the leader has no more responsibility or authority than anyone else in a group.

Do leaders matter? Edwin P. Hollander in his book Leadership Dynamics answers the question this way:

History is full of accounts of the attainment of leaders and of their personal qualities. The game of 'might have been' is loaded with this element; Would the American Colonies have successfully won their freedom without George Washington? Would the British have been able to rally as quickly and enthusiastically against great odds in the 1940 Battle of Britain, without Winston Churchill? It is not entirely possible to say, but the conventional wisdom is that these leaders mattered a great deal (4:3).

In addition, President Kennedy set the long term goal of the United States in space when he decided to send man to the moon before the end of the 1960s. He dedicated the United States to that goal and achieved it even in his death. He had strategic

vision and he provided the direction for goal achievement.

A leader makes a difference because he determines the parameters of behavior of the people in his organization. As the sole individual with ultimate authority and responsibility, the people in his organization are obligated to follow his instructions and directions. Be it good or bad, his leadership is the key to success or failure of an organization achieving its goals. For example, the leader decides where to apply scarce resources and which tasks receive required support. He not only determines which areas get the physical support but also the intangible support like time. A leader can doom a project by simply deciding not to allocate time for its accomplishment. In addition, a leader determines the level of performance of his subordinates by setting minimum standards for production. Also, he sets standards of behavior for those who wish to remain in the organization, including standards of dress and conduct.

The good leader leads by example and demonstrates concepts of dedication and integrity. He demonstrates and emphasizes those areas to his people to insure they understand what he wants. For those technical areas where his people don't have expertise, he takes the necessary steps to insure they're properly trained to accomplish those tasks.

Leadership is an art of influence. According to Harold Reed, leadership is "the ability to get a person to do what you want him to do, when you want it done, in a way you want it done, because he wants to do it" (9:205). In the absence of that influence by charisma or persuasion, the leader sets up a credible system of punishment and for positive acts, a system of rewards. Each of the policies or directives issued by the leader impact the members of his organization to some degree.

The leader makes a difference, day to day, by assigning personnel to particular tasks as he determines their skills or abilities meet the tasking. A leader can change the structure of an organization to maximize the impact of each individual's contribution. He approves or disapproves new initiatives and modifies existing procedures and policies. He can change work hours which could increase or decrease productivity or morale.

The leader can and does interpret the mission in order to make it more clear in the minds of his subordinates. By making it clearer to his subordinates, he can help them set individual goals which contribute to the accomplishment of the overall mission.

A leader can motivate or destroy the morale of an organization by fostering different perceptions about his ability to deal effectively with people in or outside the unit. If it's perceived that the leader is firm yet fair, an atmosphere of trust and professionalism will exist. If the leader is perceived as moody and arbitrary, the organization will be lethargic and tentative.

The bottom line is the leader matters because of his authority and responsibility. He has the wherewithal to influence people and change things. He matters because he can put an organization on a particular path and influence its direction for many years into the future.

## Chapter Two

This chapter details Gen Smith's background in order to qualify him as an authority on leadership. From this background the reader may realize possible biases or gain an insight into his mindset.

Possibly the most important trait displayed by a leader is integrity. But where does a person learn integrity? There may not be a correct answer to that question. Integrity is something you develop from your beliefs and upbringing. It is taught and learned through everyday experiences. Integrity is doing the right thing regardless of the personal consequences. It's living up to Abraham Lincoln's belief that "honesty is the best policy" (9:202). Gen Smith exemplifies Lincoln's honest man through his keen sense of what is right and his conviction for principles. He is a man of integrity.

Gen Smith was born at West Point, NY in 1934. His father, an army officer, was a first lieutenant on the provisional staff at the time (15:42). Certainly as an army officer, and graduate in USMA Class of 1922 (19:21) he was a good role model for Gen Smith. Gen Smith traveled extensively as a child, both in the continental United States and abroad. He graduated from Highland Falls High School, NY in 1952 (18:1).

After graduation from high school he attended USMA at West Point gaining a Bachelor of Science degree and furthering his moral and integrity training. That training was characterized by the cadet honor code which says, "a cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do" (17:2). Four years in an environment as intense as the one which existed then, and now, cannot help but influence the character of those who attend.

After graduation from the academy, General Smith attended pilot training at Marana Air Base, Ariz., and Webb Air Force Base, Texas, receiving his wings in September 1957. After combat crew training at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., and Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., he reported to his first operational assignment a Toul-Rosieres Air Base, France, in 1958. For the next six years, he flew F-100s in France; Germany; England Air Force Base, La.; and at Incirlik and Cigli Common Defense Installations, Turkey. (18:1)

Gen Smith attended graduate school at Columbia University from 1964-1966 where he received his Ph.D. in International Relations in 1967. During the next seven years he was assigned, off and on, to the faculty of the U.S. Air Force Academy. During that period he left the academy to attend F-4 replacement training at Homestead AFB, Fl. in 1968, and in August of that year he was assigned to Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand with the 555th (Triple Nickel) Tactical Fighter Squadron. He flew 180 missions and had 370 combat hours in the F4D aircraft before returning to the academy (18:2).

After his tour in Thailand he wrote The Air Force Plans for Peace 1943-45, "The focus of the work is on the planning of the U.S. Army Air Force during the war with regard to military aviation policy in the postwar world. It is a case study of the methods and processes of military planning" (11:1).

From 1973-1975 he was assigned to the Plans Directorate, Headquarters, US Air Force, Washington, DC. From May 1975-July 1976, he was military assistant to the deputy secretary of Defense. His next assignment was as Deputy Commander for Maintenance, 50th Tactical Fighter Wing, Hahn AB, Germany. In June 1977 he became vice commander and later commander of the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing, Bitburg AB, Germany (18:1).

"From March 1979 until January 1981, Gen Smith served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, 2nd Allied Tactical Air Force, Rheindahlen, Germany" (18:2). In February 1981 he was reassigned as Deputy Director of Plans in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations at Air Force Headquarters and in August became the Director of Plans (18:2). His final assignment came in July 1983 when he became Commandant, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C. and served until his retirement on 1 August 1986.

In addition to his military accomplishments, Gen Smith co-authored the book Creating Strategic Vision, in which he wrote an essay entitled "Long Range Planning: A National Necessity." In it he characterizes himself as "a leader, a planner, an operator, a researcher, and a teacher" (12:7). Representative Newt Gingrich, who wrote the introduction to the book, says of Gen Smith, "Perry Smith's experience in developing the Air Force system of vision development, long range planning, and reporting to a senior leader is an experience worth studying by every student, not just of the military, but of any large system" (12:xviii).

Gen Smith is eminently qualified to write on the subject of leadership as he did in Taking Charge. His background as a leader and, just as importantly, as a follower validates his credentials as an authority on the subject. His diverse duty assignments and experience as a commander and long range planner lend credibility to his words.

### Chapter Three

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the validity of Gen Smith's principles based on a literature review and personal experience. His principles are based on their applicability to large and complex units. He defines large and complex units as ones the size of an air force wing or army battalion or as complex as an embassy. In addition, I assert his principles also apply to leaders of small units.

Gen Smith lists 20 fundamentals of leadership. He doesn't intend them to be an all-inclusive list, but they are the fundamentals which form his philosophy of leadership. According to Harold Reed, forming a philosophy of leadership is one of four basic tenets of leadership. The other three are: a philosophy of life, understanding and utilizing the motivational forces, and a sense of mission. He goes further to say:

The second essential in the basics of leadership is a well defined philosophy of leadership. A superficial attempt to substitute 'tricks of the trade' for a thorough study of leadership will not do. The greatest need in our world today is for great and good leaders. The greatest need in these United States is for leadership, men and women of integrity (9:204).

Gen Smith recognizes the necessity of a philosophy of leadership. His 20 fundamentals are the foundation of his work and comprise his philosophy. Like Reed, he includes the quality of integrity high on his philosophical list.

"Leaders should exude integrity" (13:15). Integrity is the fundamental of which Gen Smith says, "of all the qualities a leader must have, integrity is the most important" (13:15). Leaders must show it, demonstrate it, model it both personally and institutionally (13:15).

The definition of integrity, like many concepts is open to interpretation. "Integrity is an abstract ideal..." (8:11). Definitions vary with the person who defines it. A simple definition, in layman's terms is being honest and doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do, or simply put, honest rightness. A dictionary definition is "a rigid adherence to a code or standard of values" (20:1174).



Though it may mean different things to different people, authors agree on the importance of integrity and its effects where it is lacking. "The effects of lack of integrity upon morale are neither precipitous nor cataclysmic in nature. Lack of integrity is like a cancer, growing slowly, concealed and protected by the tissues it attacks, until it either destroys its host or is removed by radical surgery" (8:77). A lack of integrity can certainly destroy the effectiveness of an organization, but so too can a lack of trust.

"Trust is vital" (13:3). Gen Smith keys on the leader of the large organization trusting his subordinate leaders. He believes trusting subordinates nurtures subleaders and gives them the opportunity to exercise their creative talents. He also believes without trust a large organization will often suffer a combination of low performance and poor morale" (13:3,4). This is certainly true; however, "One cannot fail to recognize that one of the conditions for effectiveness is the ability of the leader to gain the acceptance and confidence of those led" (5:112). In other words, the subordinates must also trust the leader.

In contrast to Gen Smith's top-down trust, the smaller organization's emphasis is more on the bottom-up relationship. The leader in a small organization has the luxury of being closer to his people and can exercise more hands-on leadership and supervision thus, top-down trust becomes slightly less critical. The essence of the relationship now becomes, "Do the subordinates trust in the leader's ability to lead?" Although trust has variations in its direction, it's still vital to the effectiveness of an organization. Trust is a paramount fundamental since it is the foundation upon which many others build.

"A leader must be a good teacher" (13:4). Gen Smith says a "leader must be willing to teach skills, to share insights and experiences and work closely with people to help them mature and be creative...By teaching, leaders can inspire, motivate, and influence subordinates at various levels" (13:4).

The difference from one organization to another is only a matter of degree and type of skills, insights, and experiences. In smaller organizations, the leader is more detail oriented and may deal more with technical and basic information. The leaders of larger organizations provide more conceptual data and guidance rather than specific, directive information. Regardless of material, a teacher gains respect when he can improve his subordinate's ability to perform by teaching and giving them the benefit of his experience.

"A leader is rarely a problem solver" (13:4). He must provide overall direction and guidance and rely on his subordinates to provide solutions for his approval. Naturally, some judgment must be exercised in smaller organizations, especially at the lower levels, but the principle is sound. The leader cannot do

everything. Gen Smith does acknowledge that "at times when the organization is in serious trouble, when subordinates appear unable to formulate a good answer to a problem, when only the leader has the expertise, the understanding, or the contacts to make the right decisions, the leader should step in" (13:4,5). Using this approach also provides an avenue for the germination of new, creative, ideas and increases the feeling of worth in subordinates. Gen Smith uses a quotation from Gen Patton to illustrate the point. Patton said, "never tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity" (13:5).

More importantly, because of time constraints, the leader can't waste his time comprehensively solving everyday problems. He must channel his talents towards ensuring the unit fits into the "big picture." He must maintain an awareness of how his unit interfaces with people and organizations outside of his own. By trying to personally solve all of the unit's problems, the leader often gets bogged down and loses that necessary awareness.

"The leader must be a communicator" (13:5). Without the ability to clearly communicate, the leader relinquishes any positive influence on the organization. The leader's direction and intent must not only be provided to his subordinates but must also be understood. "It is not surprising, then, to find scientific investigations showing that a strong correlation exists between leadership and ability to speak and write fluently. Practically all of the studies have confirmed that, to the leader, language facility is virtually sine qua non" (14:25), that without which there is nothing (14:124).

Yet, communications is clearly a two way process. No organization can exist unless there are adequate communications throughout the unit, not just from the leader to the follower. "In thinking about education for leadership, we have to keep remembering that leadership is a continuous dialogue, not an act but an interaction between leaders and followers" (2:183). Effective communications also contributes to effective time management. Lack of communications wastes time by making it necessary to re-issue directives and reaccomplish misunderstood tasks.

"A leader must manage time well and use it effectively" (13:5). To achieve effective time management "leaders must work smarter not harder, must learn to say 'no' to time wasters, and must deal with the pathology of information and information overload" (13:5). Effective communication, starting with the leader, is the necessary first step.

"Leaders should trust their intuition" (13:7). Intuition is one of the more elusive concepts Gen Smith uses as one of his fundamentals. "Intuition is knowledge gained without rational thought. And since it comes from some stratum of awareness just below the conscious level, it is slippery and elusive, to say the least" (10:11). It will send you signals that can indicate the

organization is going in the wrong direction. These signals should prompt you to ask more questions and gain additional insight on important issues (13:7). Further, Gen Smith believes leaders "probably would not have reached their present positions unless they had good intuition" (13:7). Mueller agrees with Gen Smith.

Don't disregard those nagging voices trying to tell you what you don't want to hear. They may come bearing a career-saving message. Admittedly, a conflict can arise between the trust it takes to pursue an intuitive flash and the skepticism needed to spawn a flash-in-the-pan idea. At first the two kinds of flashes may seem equally alluring. So listen for the warning bell before you shout, Eureka (10:157)!

In his development of intuition Gen Smith says "part of intuition is having your 'antennae' out, keeping your hand on the pulse of the organization, and being 'street smart and in touch'" (13:8). From this standpoint, he's right on the mark. "Moseying around the office, plant, or marketplace and feeling the pulse is an important part of the preparation process for setting off an intuitive spark" (10:57). Knowing your organization is one of the most important aspects of being able to influence its direction. This sentiment is useful regardless of the size or complexity of an organization. The better you know your unit, the better off you are as a leader.

"Leaders must be willing to remove people for cause" (13:8). Part of knowing your organization is being aware of who's doing a good job and who isn't. People who aren't pulling their weight, they must be removed. On the surface this seems fairly obvious, however, many judgment calls must be made. Probably the most important one being, "Is the organization better off with the individual or without him?" In some settings the leader may be faced with a choice of a marginal performer or a vacancy. Again, the removal decision is a judgment call and will depend on the unique situation of the organization.

For large organizations it may be easier to remove an individual than in smaller organizations. In large organizations the loss of one person may not be felt as severely as in an organization where every person is essential to mission accomplishment. On the other hand, the uncertainty of removing an individual becomes moot if the determination is made that the person in question inhibits accomplishment of the mission or is counterproductive. If that's the case, the removal mandate is clear. Although Gen Smith doesn't elaborate on this point his message is unequivocal. People who negatively effect mission accomplishment must be removed.

"Leaders must take care of their people" (13:8). For every negative aspect of leadership there are many more positive aspects. For everyone who isn't doing his job there are dozens more who are. Those dozens must be taken care of. "People obey commands

and orders. But, better still, people respond quickly, willingly, and give that extra effort to leaders who genuinely care for them" (16:1).

Gen Smith refers to taking care of people professionally by "working to get good assignments for deserving individuals" (13:8). Certainly this is part of taking care of your people, but it's only a small part. Taking care of your people means lending the influence of your position to removing obstacles that impede the success of your subordinates or inhibit their productivity. An example of this is the leader who intercedes on behalf of his people to obtain better medical care or better education and recreation facilities. Taking care of people is an around-the-clock task which increases productivity. Good leaders should never underestimate its utility.

"Leaders must provide vision" (13:9). This also appears self explanatory. Still, Gen Smith goes a step further and states that "good planning, goal setting and priority setting can leave the organization in better shape and with a clearer strategic direction than when the leader took over" (13:9). In other words, be mission oriented. Don't just live for the moment, but look ahead to the future and be aware that your actions today can, and will, contribute to the success or failure of the mission long after you've departed. The good of the organization and the accomplishment of the mission transcends the good of the leader or any individual. In Gen Smith's words, "leaders must subordinate their ambitions and egos to the goals of the unit or institution that they lead" (13:9). If the leader takes care of the unit, the unit will take care of him, and because of this intertwined nature of things they both succeed.

Three of the mechanics of being a good leader included in Gen Smith's fundamentals are knowing "how to run meetings, understanding the decision and implementation processes and being visible and approachable" (13:10,11). Each of these mechanics Gen Smith says a leader must do. Each also applies to any size organization. Running a proper meeting saves time and increases productivity. Gen Smith gives some specific guidelines like "establish ground rules for the meeting" (13:10) and "discontinue regular meetings which are not serving an important purpose" (13:10). He makes an excellent observation about being visible and approachable. He says that leaders of large organization "should spend no more than four hours a day in their offices" (13:10). This guide is useful to all leaders if you take the converse of the statement and practice that the remainder of your duty day should be in contact with your people. He observes that you can learn a great deal about the health or ill health of your organization by keeping in contact with your subordinates through less structured events such as jogging, unit social events and athletic events. These are good methods of gaining feedback and ensuring required information is getting to everyone. Even though these are good techniques he cautions that the leader should beware of becoming "just one of the guys...A leader must be special while being approachable" (13:11,12).

"Leaders should have a sense of humor" (13:14). While leading any organization, especially a military one, is serious business, the effects of humor must not be forgotten. Gen Smith cautions, however, that "humor can be a great reliever of tension" (13:12) but, it should not be "delivered with an acid tongue and aimed at subordinates" (13:14) because it could be very counterproductive (13:14).

"Leaders must be decisive, but patiently decisive" (13:12). With leadership comes responsibility and with that comes decision making. Making the wrong choices consistently is a quick road to disaster. Gen Smith simply reemphasizes, what should be common sense. Leaders should listen to all sides of the issues, get appropriate council and make timely decisions, not snap judgments. (13:12,13) He also astutely writes "a non-decision is itself a decision and should be recognized for what it is" (13:13). Former President Nixon made a similar observation about great leaders. He said, "the great leader needs insights, foresight, and the willingness to take the bold but calculated risk. He also needs luck. Above all, he must be decisive...He must not succumb to 'paralysis by analysis'" (7:1).

"A leader should be introspective" (13:13). This is something which most people engage in to some degree but, rarely think about. Introspection is simply self examination. The importance of this concept is hammered home very clearly.

The important point is this. If you sincerely want to increase the effectiveness of your personal, face-to-face contacts, you must first turn inward and examine yourself. Unless you know yourself you will never fully understand others. Unless you recognize and understand your own biases, emotional hotspots, and defenses, you will never be able to understand why others react as they do. Unless you have insight into your own personality, you will never be able to keep it from interfering with the job at hand. Know yourself and you've gained an ally; remain a stranger to yourself and you will have a hidden enemy in the room (2:6,7).

This concept follows closely with Gen Smith's earlier principle of intuition or knowing thyself. A leader must be keenly aware of the changes which occur in himself and his subordinates. Recognizing and dealing with those changes enables the leader to grow with his organization and promote progress. It also allows the leader to remain open minded and receptive to new ideas, another of Gen Smith's fundamentals.

"Leaders should establish and maintain high standards of dignity" (13:19). Without dignity there is little respect for the leader and subsequently for the position he represents. The leader would soon lose all ability to influence his organization. On the other hand, "when standards of dignity are established and emphasized, everyone can take pride in both accomplishments and

the style of the operation" (13:19).

After establishing the twenty fundamentals for his leadership philosophy Gen Smith begins to integrate the leader with the organization. The chapter titled "Taking Over" tells us that a leader must be prepared to take charge of an organization immediately. He discusses those things a leader should do to make the transition as efficient and effective as possible. The majority of what he says can be summed up by saying, gather as much intelligence on the organization as possible before taking over. The necessity of this approach is shown in Guidelines for Command, A Handbook on the Leadership of People for Air Force Commanders and Supervisors. It states,

Take Command; Grab Hold of It! You are responsible and your unit is depending on you to make the right decisions and lead your people toward the accomplishment of your mission. Your unit will reflect your leadership style. You cannot afford time to ease into the job as you may have done in other jobs. You can, however, and should spend time finding out all you can about the job before assuming command (16:2).

Gen Smith suggests the incoming leader use everything available to accomplish that task, including whatever information can be gleaned from the outgoing leader. Some military commanders and supervisors prefer just the opposite. Many times new wing commanders arrive the night before a change of command ceremony and the outgoing commander departs immediately afterwards. This, of course, leaves little time for face to face communications. There may be some merit to this approach when the new wing commander can rely on the vice-commander for required information.

Gen Smith provides some straightforward questions to ask when beginning to know your organization. The most important is, "What is the mission"? It's clear that information gathering in preparation for assuming command is important prior to taking over any new organization. A leader who does his homework and knows what he's getting into can best determine how and what the organization needs. Being unprepared could lead to failure by doing the wrong things and alienating subordinates.

Gen Smith laid the foundation of his book with his philosophy of leadership which included his fundamentals. Then he jumped forward to "Establishing Standards: Personal and Institutional Integrity" (13:27). Gen Smith's discussion briefly covers establishing standards of integrity. As addressed earlier, integrity is the most important fundamental in his leadership philosophy. His writings on how to hire, counsel or fire an individual are most helpful. In his crisp, direct, style he provides questions to make the sessions meaningful and effective. Of course a leader can't hire all those who need to be hired, counsel all those who need direction, or terminate all who should be terminated. The leaders of large organizations

must however, deal with their immediate subordinates. Gen Smith emphasizes that the task of firing an individual is the leader's responsibility.

He also provides the leader, or would-be leader, information on some things he can expect to get involved in after taking over an organization. Not only does he mention those areas but he discusses appropriate techniques to handle them. He discusses appropriate techniques for leading in a crisis, dealing with police blotters, addressing failures and criticisms, and complementing creatively.

The most practical of Gen Smith's tools comes from his checklists. Although checklists can be helpful in many situations, it's impossible to have one for everything. He is quick to point out that "checklists are not substitutes for judgment, but they can trigger the mind and make the task at hand somewhat easier" (13:157).

Gen Smith ends his book by providing the leader with some interesting examples of leadership situations which require leadership actions. The examples are effective because they're interesting and completely understandable. The situations he describes, or variations of them, are likely to arise in any organization and thus have great utility. Examples are presented through case studies. After reading each the reader has a chance to reflect on them before going on to a discussion of actual outcomes. In this way Gen Smith provides food for thought, a necessary ingredient in the learning process.

## Chapter Four

Taking Charge was written to apply to large or complex organizations. In the previous chapter it was plain to see that Gen Smith's 20 fundamentals, and later, his concepts, could easily apply to leaders in any size organization. The majority of the book can be adapted to smaller organizations, but several areas provide limited use to leaders of such units.

The purpose of this chapter is to detail those areas which have limited use for leaders of small organizations. It's important to note however, there are no absolutes. Although the following areas may not apply to the majority of small organizations, there are always exceptions.

"Understanding Personality Types: A tool for Enlightened Leaders" (13:83). The key phrase here is "a tool for enlighten leaders". This concept lends itself to use by accomplished, perhaps sophisticated leaders. As such, the young leader of a small organization may find the discussion largely academic and lending little to the practical application of leadership. With that aside, the validity of the concepts aren't in question.

Gen Smith spends a good deal of time discussing tests that evaluate a person's leadership style. This was largely an academic discussion but, perhaps a necessary one. He discusses the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which "measures perception, judgment, interest, values, needs and motivation preferences" (13:84). Researchers, specifically, Westman, Canter and Richek have "recognized the MBTI as the best survey instrument available for determining personality type" (6:6). More credibility has been given to the utility of the MBTI by the USAF. It was administered "to all students in the Air War College class of 1987 in early August 1986" (6:6). These discussions, the one on the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KIA) and the one on the Strength Development Inventory were interesting in that they introduced the reader to three tools for increased understanding of personality styles.

Toward the end of the chapter Gen Smith draws a positive correlation between physical and mental health. He notes

people who are in regular exercise programs and who maintain good control of their work habits, diet, and



weight, have more to contribute in the long term to the goals of their institutions than those who are very overweight, or who do not pay attention to their diet and health and, therefore, often work below performance levels (13:92,93).

Given the present physical fitness craze it's easy to draw such a conclusion. However, even as far back as 1964 "the natural conclusion supported by the evidence is that proper exercise does help to maintain sound physical well-being and promote peak mental abilities..." (3:17).

Gen Smith goes on to say the leader should be visible in his exercise program to encourage subordinates to do the same (13:93). This is practical information which reinforces the concept of leading by example.

"Dealing with the Media: The Challenge and the Opportunity" (13:113). The usefulness of this section is dependent more on the function of the organization rather than the size. The information provided by Gen Smith is good and provides a wise man's view on how to deal with the press. He discusses how to get the most out of an interview by steering the conversation in the right direction if required. He says you can do that by asking and answering your own questions. This technique allows you to educate the press while publicizing pertinent information. He also encourages the leader not to think of the press as the enemy. Handled properly the press can be helpful, but beware of those who are biased. If you encounter a biased press try to minimize damage by clearing up misconceptions or inaccuracies (13:113-17). Peter Hannaford supports Gen Smith's perceptions on being interviewed by the media. He believes strongly that the interviewee needs to be prepared, set the ground rules and ask questions himself (3A:41-48).

Most small organizations would not normally deal with the media unless something unusual happens or the nature of their business and mission were of notable importance. This is particularly true of private companies. Yet, those companies which deal with federal or state government or public institutions always have the opportunity to shine. Recognizing that something out of the ordinary could occur which would bring their organization into the public eye, the section on media could be potentially useful to all leaders.

Similar to dealing with the media, the concept of leading international organizations has limited use for leaders of small organizations. However, the information presented by Gen Smith is a good common sense approach to avoid the "ugly American syndrome." The theme of this section is recognize the differences between people of different cultures and backgrounds. Recognize the "American Way" is not necessarily the only way and differences encountered need to be dealt with properly. The best way to deal with difference is to understand the people you're dealing with as best you can before awkward situations arise.

Understanding personality types, dealing with the media, and leading international organizations, as presented by Gen Smith, are valid concepts. However, this chapter concludes that they don't apply as universally to all organizations as his fundamentals and other concepts. This is especially true in the case of smaller organizations.

## Chapter Five

In conclusion, this chapter comments on Taking Charge as a whole. Chapter One examined Gen Smith's thesis and concluded his premise was valid. That premise was that leaders count -- they make a difference in the performance of their organization. Then Chapter Two presented a biographical sketch of Gen Smith to qualify him as an authority on leadership. His military assignments as a follower, a leader in command, and a planner gave him excellent credentials. Chapter Three examined the content of Taking Charge. It concluded that Gen Smith's ideas were valid not only for leaders of large and complex organizations, but for leaders of small organizations as well. Chapter Four followed by detailing areas of Taking Charge which had limited use for leaders of small organizations. Even though the areas addressed had limited use the concepts were generally applicable. This chapter finally conclude this book analysis with an overall impression of Taking Charge.

Lt Gen Richard D. Lawrence indicates Gen Smith wrote Taking Charge to assist the leaders of large organizations "with the special task of leading such organizations" (13:iii). James Bond Stockdale says the book "fills a void" (13:xi) in the field of leadership. Gen Smith provides a tool to be used as a guide in accomplishing leadership tasks. It provides a memory jogger to those busy executives who, in many cases, are so caught up in their everyday jobs that they may not be addressing areas which could improve their leadership skills. They could be missing some general areas which, if addressed, could improve their ability to accomplish the mission.

Gen Smith's book is a general work, an overview. It's meant to apply to leaders of "large organizations such as those with more than one thousand people under the command of a single individual such as an Air Force wing, an Army brigade, or a large ship" (13:xviii). Complex organizations consist of "one hundred or more individuals, but are organizations which have such diverse or complex responsibilities that the leader is unable to keep track of all the ongoing issues at one time. Examples might be large embassies or large staff directories (13:xviii). Organizations in these categories cover the gamut of our society both public and private. They operate in every imaginable way and have innumerable different structures. Their makeup gives different degrees of authority and responsibility to their

leaders based on their particular perception of the function of a leader. Gen Smith wrote a book that covers all organizations. In doing so he gave insights into some of the techniques which make effective leaders.

To make this work applicable to such a large group of organizations, the writings were general. The diversity of organizations prevents the author from going into detail in any particular area. This could be construed as both detrimental and advantageous to the book's utility. First, for the exceptional leader who has studied leadership throughout his career, he will find Gen Smith's writings shallow and stating only the obvious. On the positive side, Gen Smith takes those obvious basics and puts them in a brief, useful form. His style allows the reader to grab hold of those principles he's unfamiliar with and to skim over the others for reinforcement. The basics give the leader a jumping off point and awakens the desire for further study. The book is readable and understandable. It doesn't take a PhD to adapt his examples to areas that are useful to any size organization.

Gen Smith's fundamentals, for the most part, are simply traits demonstrated by successful leaders. As mentioned earlier, Gen Smith's fundamentals aren't comprehensive, but certainly, the earlier these traits are understood and developed the better chance an individual will have of evolving into a successful leader. For those who are already successful, this book will serve as a course correction device to tweak their thinking and put them on a better track towards success.

Gen Smith's book can't take a raw recruit and make him a leader. What it does is provide the basic understanding from which a raw recruit can build. It gives him direction, a plan. It stimulates him to think about what a leader is or should be. For the young leader it may scare him into realizing the magnitude of a leader's responsibility. The logical utility of such a scare could be either increased study in preparation for his future role, or discouragement and redirection of career ambitions. Either way, the leader and the organization will both benefit.

Gen Lawrence, who wrote the forward to Taking Charge, said "[It] is a particularly accessible book: one that leaders will want to keep handy for reference" (13:xiii) Gen Smith's book is just what it pretends to be, "a practical guide for leaders" (13:). It's a compilation of his thoughts on how an effective leader should act and some of the tools he should possess.

In analyzing this book several conclusions were reached. First, Gen Smith wrote a valid, concise, work on leadership which can be taken at face value. The thrust of the information he provides is in line with contemporary thoughts on leadership. He essentially goes back to the basics to provide a practical guide for leaders.

Second, even though the work was written specifically for leaders of large organizations, the majority of the book is beneficial to all leaders, regardless of the size of the unit. Its applicability to smaller units derives from its basic concepts and common sense approaches. The information is easily understood by the novice leader and can be used as a point of departure for understanding leadership and its complexities.

And finally, Taking Charge is a handy reference book for a leader. When a leader is uncertain about something he can go to Taking Charge and get an idea of where to proceed. He can refer to one of Gen Smith's checklist to jog his memory or provide reassurance. Even better, he can use Gen Smith's concepts and checklists to build his own leadership philosophy.

Taking Charge should be required reading for all potential military commanders and leaders. Its general nature stimulates thought on leadership and provides a foundation for the continued development of sound leadership principles.

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